



Continuing a 10 year practice, in May 2008 the King County Sheriff's Office initiated a citizen survey to identify the priorities and concerns of residents living in our contract cities and unincorporated King County. The sample consisted of 100 residents from each of the contract cities, as well as an evenly distributed representation of Unincorporated King County. The total completed sample size was 2000. The analysis derived from the poll results is based on the most significant issues/concerns of the survey participants.

Here's what the citizens had to say:

SAFETY

- ❑ 90% of residents said they feel safe walking alone in their communities. Residents living outside Southwest King County reported the highest feelings of personal safety in their communities.
- ❑ When asked what more the KCSO could do for residents, 38% said they would like the King County Sheriff's Office to add "more patrols" which is consistent with the 2004 citizen survey results.
- ❑ 79% of residents said they would feel less safe if budget cuts were implemented and jobs were lost in order to balance the King County budget.

CUSTOMER SERVICE & EFFECTIVENESS

- ❑ KCSO deputies were praised for being courteous, fair, respectful and objective.
- ❑ 57% of residents who had contact with their local police thought they were very effective or effective in solving their problem, 15% said partially effective, 18% said ineffective and 9% were not sure.

PRIORITIES

- ❑ 35% of residents said drug use was a top concern. Residential burglary and vandalism were mentioned next as the crimes residents most often worried about. Empirical evidence has shown that property crimes and drug use are often interconnected.
- ❑ 92% of survey respondents said maintaining school safety and violence prevention programs was either "important" or "very important" to addressing crime in their communities. The next two most important programs were conducting specialized investigations and having cops on the streets 24 hours a day.

- ❑ KCSO can educate the public to prevent personal property crimes as well as auto thefts. Without instilling a sense of fear, KCSO should remind the public to be vigilant about common sense precautions such as shutting their windows and locking their cars. Support for local partnerships, like block watch and educational outreach, will allow KCSO to focus their attention on specialized investigations, gangs, and capturing violent felons.

CHARTER

- ❑ The vast majority of citizens (69%) want the King County Sheriff to remain an elected post. This current preference allows the citizens a voice in choosing their elected officials and confirms that they would like to maintain an appropriate balance of power.
- ❑ Over 60% of survey respondents also said they support authorizing the King County Sheriff to bargain with her own employees over workplace issues. This proposal was particularly popular among younger men, those who think police services in their area are “Excellent” and those who perceive King County to have been financially irresponsible in recent years.

BUDGET

- ❑ 41% of residents characterized King County as being “responsible” with public projects and taxpayer dollars in recent years and 53% said King County has been irresponsible.
- ❑ With the value of homes declining and increasing economic instability, 40% said they would vote for either a property tax or a sales tax increase and 56% said no tax increase was acceptable to them. Only 4% were undecided.
- ❑ In the face of budget cuts, 78% of residents said implementing KCSO’s culture reform programs, such as those recommended by the Blue Ribbon Panel, were either “important” or “very important” to fund.
- ❑ Even given the likelihood that the county budget deficit would grow without stable funding in place, 48% of respondents still said we should “wait and see” before placing a measure before the voters while 42% said they would like to vote on something soon.